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NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR CHANGING MEN/WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE SEVEN MYTHS OF SEXISM

by Gerry Sütter

I put my boys to bed: the dishes drain, diapers changed, room cleaned, the dozen deeds done that dads do before the ritual of bedtime may be indulged. I read my four year old son two stories while his ten-month-old brother plays quietly.

The light is dimmed. I begin to chant. Slowly. Not quietly. A song of God and love of self. My deep bass chant lays a blanket through the monochrome room. The gravely timbre of my voice strikes me now as one of the most beautiful instruments I know. My oldest son puts his head on my shoulder and snuggles. My younger son cruises quietly back and forth along the bed, patting my belly, joins me in his own quiet key, "Bap, bap, bap...bap, bap, bap." Soon they both sleep.

I don't know where I heard that infants don't like deep male voices. Some study? Somebody said? I'm glad, though, that I was reading in a men's newsletter about a father taking complete pride in his male voice with his infant.

This is a myth. At least these two boys find the male timbre soothing. When my first son was an infant, no one instructed me to speak only in the counter-tenor range, but I did. Sexism is littered with such unthinking behavior. It was as if I believed the allegation that males are no good at nurturing and somehow had to sound like a female in order for it to work. Of course this was not so.

Sexism perpetuates a view of reality that is at least foggy and is at worst dangerous and hurtful. In my work counseling men I have found seven myths, or faulty assumptions, that underlie sexism and support sexist behavior.

Myth Number One: SEXISM IS REAL

One of my favorite buttons reads "Sexism is a Social Disease." You find sexism everywhere: in churches, homes, schools, offices: in playgrounds, bars, and beaches. There is so much of the system that supports sexist attitudes that it seems like a conspiracy. And in fact, until the advent of the feminist movement, sexism was taken for granted, something inexorable: "That's just the way it is." "Just the way men are." "It's always been that way."

My assertion that sexism is not real is a paradoxical statement. It is true that this oppressive society sanctions and supports men who behave in "masculine" ways, and the media and the capitalistic system reinforce the message. However, the yap and yaw of sexism is a very individual thing. Throwing up our hands before the magnitude and pervasiveness of oppression mis-paints

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the problem. Sexism boils down to a lot of bad habits and rigid behavior patterns occurring in many individual people.

The main battleground upon which we need to devote most of our energies is that of making our lives the way we want them. This means having flexible and satisfying relationships with our mates, friends, co-workers, employers, children, and parents. Sexism colors all these relationships. We have learned that with clear thinking and bold choice we can have a dramatic impact on the way we behave and the way others treat us.

Sexism is not real, if by real we mean something inherently human. It is only a rigid and unthinking pattern of beliefs. As with the old idea that bleeding people with leeches helps cure them, once we stop the behavior, we no longer suffer the consequences. We can choose to behave any way we want. So can anyone else.

Myth Number Two:
SEXISM IS ONE THING

In this time where correct politics is everything, a discussion on sexism will draw a knowing nod from all. It is often tossed about with the same glib seriousness with which we recount last week's episode of 60 Minutes. I always know that someone's missed the point when they refer to sexism as "that force" or "the thing."

The problem with having "the bottom lines" on sexism is that it is not one thing. It varies as much as human beings. How were we raised? How were we mistreated as children? What were the messages that were laid in about the roles of men and women? These are the questions that give insights into the real stuff of sexism.

There is a danger in making an issue too pat or defined, especially when we are looking at human beings. If we are talking about rigid behavior patterns, we stand to lose what is rich and fine about the human being, seeing only the parasitical mask of his bad habits.

Men tend to have similar patterns of behavior because our culture reinforces conformity. However, sexism is laid in differently with each of us. Multiple oppressions such as racism, classism, gay oppression, well bodyism are added to sexism. The uniqueness of our upbringing (adulthood) affects the ways that we behave.

Myth Number Three:
SEXISM HURTS JUST WOMEN

The sword of sexism swings both ways. In a patriarchy, sexism validates the subjugation of women. This means that men are conferred benefits and are sanctioned in their masculinity (or is it non-feminine behavior?). Human beings don't hurt other human beings unless they have been

mistreated first. Blaming men is not an effective way to stop our hurtful behavior. Rather than asking the perjorative "What's wrong with you," it seems much more helpful to ask instead, "What were the conditions that make such absurd behavior seem appropriate?"

The training of boys, the cruelty, the non-support, the violence, the evasion, the lack of many fathers' investment in our upbringing, is often the recipe for an aggressive, arrogant, emotionally-checked, over-driven, fear-drenched human being. This has nothing whatsoever to do with being a man. Any woman who is brought up with the same constellation of behavior with the same role model will behave in exactly the same way. This is just patterned behavior—not being a man.

From the mortality statistics we can see that men hurt. Men die seven years sooner, have a much higher incidence of stress-related maladies such as heart disease, stroke, ulcers, suicides, and most cancers. Men are more frequently in prison (twenty to one) and are more likely to be the victims of murder and violent crime.

There are four ways that men are consistently mistreated in this society. The first is that they are expected to be over-responsible, believing that it is their duty as men to provide everything that their families could want. Second, men are not given permission to feel their emotions. We are expected to hold it in, except, unfortunately, in our domestic environments and/or when we are inebriated. We are trained to accept violence as a gender characteristic. Finally, men are given almost no encouragement to be close to each other.

Myth Number Four:
WE NEED TO TAKE POWER AWAY FROM MEN

Too often dads are scripted as disciplinarians. At men's workshops, when we ask how many of us were beaten, we are stunned to discover that 9 out of 10 men raise their hands. "Wait until your father gets home" is the motto of male neurosis. The very real hurt of being slapped is supplanted with the threat that never recedes. No matter how rarely I was hit, that hand I loved echoing needles on my cheek left a ghost of hurt and shame. And anger.

We need to differentiate between pseudo-power and the real stuff. Pseudo-power is characterized by authority, rank, sanction, and hierarchy. In authoritarian leadership, it doesn't matter who leads, because the system runs the same way. In hierarchies, people hide behind ranks and use authority and collusion to exact compliance. If this is what is meant by power, then I would agree that the world could use less from both genders.

But I think we have a view of leadership that has none of the oppressive trappings. Empowerment is the heart of the new leadership. Human beings need rest and balance in their lives.

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SEVEN MYTHS (continued)

They move boldly and make close friendships which are motivated out of unconditional love. The only tools of new leaders are one's own shining example and unlimited belief in another.

The truth has always been that it takes a powerful, self-confident, and intelligent man to live a non-sexist life. We need to be able to think clearly and choose effectively to free ourselves from the unthinking assumptions of sexism.

Myth Number Five:
BY CARING DEEPLY WE AVOID SEXISM

The hardest place to get a fix on sexism is in our own lives. What we take for granted generally has the blueprint of sexism filling in blanks.

When John and Betty get together, the zip-zap of emotion sets them to swoon; they start feeling goofy, driving around in circles, forgetting where they go. How can they worry about sexism? In small ways John puts Betty on a pedestal, carries out the trash, changes her oil, opens her door. In equally small ways Betty defers to John, lets him speak first to the bank agent, takes over his laundry, visits his friends. Specialization, right?

It is easy to see the evil of sexism in wife battering, desertion, and rape. It is evident with women making 64¢ for every dollar that men make that something is skewed. But when it comes to the front doorstep many men feel, "If it works, don't fix it." Wherever we act in our relationships without explicit agreement, our actions are based on internalized oppression.

Feeling good about another does not lessen sexism's imprint on our life. We need to make a conscious, rational choice to not collude with sexism. The only way out is to be explicit with our mates about everything and insist that they be as well.

This does not mean that no one should be in charge. Life works better when there is a leader (who is in charge of thinking well about an area) and others are supporters. The difficulty starts when one assumes she or he has to do it all and then resents it. Society is not in charge of dictating our life's job description. This is our job. Period.

Myth Number Six:
WOMEN OPPRESS MEN

I think I was wrong, twenty years ago, blaming my foul moods, the weather, as well as the war on the military-industrial complex. Since then, having worked with the government and business, I see the "system" as both less malevolent and more insidious. Less malevolent because I don't believe that anyone is capable of enforcing a conspiracy that is viewed as wrong. More insidious because there is no limit to the mistreatment people will endure if they feel "it's just that way."

Oppression is one-way injury directed at an individual solely due to his or her membership in a group. In the battle of the sexes there are many men who consider themselves victims. However, women can no more oppress men than children are capable of oppressing women. Living in a patriarchy means status, roles, and most often physical size gives men a substantial advantage. While men suffer hurt and even abuse from their mates, women do not have the social power that sanctions inequitable behavior, even though a woman's actions might be as onerous as a man's.

The world has enough guilt. It would be good for us as men to take responsibility for our emergence in a rational direction, rather than settling for the unthinking ones that abound. This sometimes means taking the reins and handing them to an unwilling rider. Funny how real power is occasionally gained by relinquishing control.

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NOCM-DC HAS A NEW HOME AND MEETING DAY

Pending board approval, the United Church will be the new home for NOCM-DC. The United Methodist Church is halfway between the Foggy Bottom and Farragut West Metro stations (about 2 blocks from each). The address is 1920 G Street. We will use the 20th Street entrance.

We owe a tremendous debt to the Women's Medical Center for being our host over the last three years, until it came to our attention that the counseling that occurs there is not always compatible with our public meetings.

The new location is Metro accessible, and has space large enough for movement workshops as well as discussion groups. We have changed the meeting day from the first *Monday* to the first *Thursday* of the month, when the room will be regularly available to us.

SEVEN MYTHS (continued)

Myth Number Seven:
THERE IS A BIG DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
MEN AND WOMEN

This is the most radical of my seven myths. At least it seems to differ with the thinking of many who are my allies in most other areas. Whether they follow Robert Bly and the mythopoetic approach to men's studies or the more traditional sociological approach, writers seem very interested in showing the uniqueness of men in comparison to women.

I remain unimpressed. When you consider how much men and women share in common, the differences are insignificant. Men and women are human. This means that any characteristic that is inherently human is inherently male. This includes the ability to nurture, be sensitive, have patience, and appreciate beauty. Likewise, anything human is inherently female; this means that decisiveness, bravery, fortitude, strength, and boldness are fundamental feminine characteristics. Both genders are loving.

Some thinkers call this androgyny (ironically, both the radical right and left, though for opposite reasons). But to me it just seems like living up to our inherent human potential. When you look at the enormous variance of life forms on this earth, the wild difference between the male lion and male praying mantis, the shared aspect of humanity makes men and women pretty close neighbors.

One of the most important lessons that feminism has taught us is that biology is not destiny. Just because we are men doesn't mean that we can't be primary caretakers for children, be gentle and sweet, have lots of intimate relationships with both men and women, and at the same time have a profound impact on the wide world; being bold, assertive, and in charge.

I wake my older son to change his diaper. "Daddy, no," he mumbles. I continue to sit him up and lay him down. His lower lip protrudes, sadly. He rolls over and sits up. "Daddy, don't, I don't want to, get me a bottle." His moaning starts to be incoherent. I proceed with his diaper and his pouting erupts into crying. "But I want a bottle..." he repeats and repeats. When I finish with his diaper, his tears spin up to a howl of indignation. He tries to kick me. I shake him once. The howl becomes a deep sob. I leave the room. This is not punishment, but my desperate stab at composure. He does not want the bottle when I return.

How is it, I ask, that he models so well the behavior I hate so in myself? The big-guy stuff—not listening to him, the impatience, shaking him—isn't me. It is, though, part of manhood in this society. I carry my son as he cries. For perhaps 15 minutes he gulps for air disconsolately. We lie down together. He puts his arms on my neck, and says before dropping off, "I love you, Daddy." Oh, my son. For you and I, this is a man's world. Let's go for it.

And, for my part, a little less encumbered.

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MEN AS BROTHERS WORKSHOP IN REVIEW

by Rob Ciapetta

On March 1, seventeen men shared as brothers in a workshop led by Steve Hornberger, a social worker from New York City. Entitled *Men as Brothers*, the workshop was organized by Doug Giauque of Silver Spring and Rob Ciapetta of Rockville and held at Rockwood Park in Potomac, MD. The men ranged in age from twenty-two to eighty and were teachers, lawyers, computer specialists, lobbyists, federal bureaucrats, writers, social workers, physical therapist, clergy and ex-clergymen, and psychologists.

The workshop offered all of us an opportunity to hug and touch deeply, to experience our loneliness and our need for brotherhood, and to share our fears and unmask our facades in an environment that was deeply spiritual and resonantly supportive. We shared psychophysical play, guided imagery, a crossing-the-threshold ritual, a tribal evocation of the deep need for brotherhood in each of us, and a Native American tribal council in which a talking stick was passed to give each of us full blossom in a powerful two-hour closing ceremony.

Steve was a wonderful leader: gentle, supportive, sensitive, forthright, and manly. The expressed goals of the workshop—to begin the integration of the macho and the nurturer in men and to create a men's council in the nation's capital—were achieved. Doug and I have set the first council meeting tentatively for April 5 in Rockville. We plan to have Steve back in April or May to copartner with Jim Collins, a New York City psychologist and psychophysical practitioner, a weekend *Men as Brothers* workshop.

For more information on both the ongoing men's council and the *Men as Brothers* weekend workshop, please contact Doug at 593-8182 or Rob at 424-7055. In peace, joy, and profound spiritual brotherhood.

P.S. A quick work about *In Praise of Men*, the March meeting of NOCM-DC. Eleven of us praised ourselves and each other for over two hours. It gave me an answer to the longing I had experienced. Thank you, my brothers! And thank you again Hillel, for your competent and gutsy leadership. I am proud to be a man among such men.

THE ROLE OF NON-COMBATANT CIVILIAN POPULATIONS IN WAR

by Jeff London

When the Vietnam Memorial first opened, I was struck that every visual or verbal reference to it moved me to heavy tears. I was not in the war as a combatant, a member of the Armed Services, nor was I anywhere near the combat zone. The cause of my reaction puzzled me for several years, but I used it in peer counseling sessions because I knew that the reason would surface. During the Vietnam War I was actively working toward its end and in a constant state of fear and paranoia concerning being drafted.

What I came to realize was that my hurt from the war was very deep and not plumbed before and that the Memorial became for me, as well as for those who served and their families, a wailing wall. In seeking to understand the hurt, I have drawn from many counselors who have been working on understanding their hurt as non-combatants in other wars (World War II, Korea, The Yom Kippur War of 1973). Some of my thoughts follow.

During periods when governments wage war, it is necessary to rally support of the civilian population behind the means and ends of the war. By seeking the support of the religious and social institutions, an apolitical moral justification is sought.

In my thinking I have attempted to keep in mind that the people who make up the government are not evil. They are not by nature duplicitous, nor do they inherently want war any more than I do. No one naturally wants to die, to kill, or be killed. No one wants their family members or friends to die or kill either.

In order to accept this situation willingly, the population must be convinced of a number of things, usually through the instillation of fear. The population must be confirmed that they are physically threatened, that sacrificing their young men is necessary to save the rest of the population. They must come to believe that their culture, their way of life, is threatened. That their privilege, their hopes and dreams, their national beliefs, will be lost to a less civilized society. This tactic is used even to rally the disenfranchised by promising them (or holding out the carrot of a promise) enfranchisement. This has always been true whether the payment for service was booty, land, freedom from slavery, or civil rights.

The people who comprise the enemy this time must be made out to be less than human, regardless of our own personal experiences. As has happened and is happening now, deporting a population serves to eliminate any images which may be contradictory to the propaganda image of what those persons are like, thus possibly making us hate them less, or see them as more human. This is a great hurt, not only to the banished, but to the banished's neighbors.

In order to get this civilian support the government uses several methods, the most common of which is the control of information. They provide scant information or misinformation, they declare censorship necessary for the national security, a term which is never explained. I have just read about a book, *A Question of Sedition: The Federal Government's Investigation of the Black Press During World War II* by Patrick S. Washburn, which deals with this very problem.

The civilian population is exposed to propaganda which instills a collective guilt surrounding the fighting forces: all the real sacrifices are being made by combatants, that they are doing this for us, and that thereby they deserve our unquestioning support to uphold their morale, so they can fight more effectively. But we are never allowed to know exactly what they are doing in our name. A wedge of distrust and unknowing is driven between the armed forces and the civilian population that continues for many until death. We deny our own needs and wants, defining them as frivolous, an act which comes down particularly hard on young children. We are led to believe that there are enemies among us and, therefore, we should be isolated and never certain whom to trust.

Charles Kreiner teaches eloquently about the conditioning of men from boyhood to become soldiers. We come to expect that at some point in our lives we will be asked to kill other men and that we will be willing to sacrifice our lives for others and for ideals. We are taught that to be a man is to endure pain and suffering and that courage and manhood is related to war and following orders. Of course, the flip side of this is that women are conditioned to allow their sons, brothers, fathers, and lovers to go to war. To understand this deep pain is to begin to fathom the depth of the oppression.

As civilians we are taught that standing for ideals other than what the government says is not only not legitimate, but against the entire foundation of society. Loving one's country and society becomes associated with supporting the government. Your love is open to ridicule and punishment if it isn't in line.

In other contexts we can see that all of these methods come under the guise of adultism and cause numerous hurts: the fear of physical punishment; the denial of that your feelings are real and justified; the relinquishing of your sense of justice; the fear of the loss of loved ones if you make a mistake when you don't know the rules.

What I think is perhaps the worst long-term effect of all this is that the hurt isn't only an isolated incident. It is maintained over a long period of time, and almost everyone, including those you

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WAR (continued)

trust, accepts the guise. During this long period of time the presence of the hurt becomes accepted as normal. Though intellectually we still fight the mechanisms of war, and though all wars eventually end, we aren't allowed the knowledge of the absence of the feelings.

Welcoming ceremonies can provide some glimpse outside of dread. How many of us in the United States spontaneously erupted in tears at the first word that the hostages from Iran were coming home and felt a great relief of a tension we had forgotten existed? But it is obvious that the sense of relief is brief and incomplete, as we are kept in a purposeful state of defense lest it should happen again.

I imagine that many readers in the United States will deny, or skip over the fact that they have hurts directly related to the presence of an ongoing war this country fought. This will mostly be so because they did not feel individually hurt by it. To them I answer: yes the men and women served in Vietnam, and the families of these men and women, did suffer. And many of us lived during the greatest period of advancement and economic health ever known with no apparent effects from an ongoing war. But that is precisely the point. There was a war going on, and we always knew it, and it did affect us.

I think the notion of stepping outside the oppression of the Nuclear Umbrella runs deeper than today's armaments. Its roots are old, and much fear and grief and confusion must be felt and understood (and information gained) before real indignation can surface and clear our hearts and minds for positive human actions.

My emotional response to the Vietnam Memorial is not all shared by my younger friends in the same way. I suppose that the Pearl Harbor memorial did not previously move me. I think it is a worthy and lofty goal to be able to heal our old wounds so that we can be strong in deterring wars, and that we can teach the preciousness of life without first having to face the horror of loss.

NOCM-DC STANDS UP FOR MEN'S IMAGE

by Mark Dressler

NOCM-DC's Steering Committee recently voted to ask the creators of a poster which negatively depicts men in ads reprinted throughout the Washington area to withdraw their poster and replace it with one which is "more reflective of non-sexist values."

Participants at the January 18 Steering Committee meeting signed a letter to Paula and Ken Kipperman of Rockville, MD, urging them to stop using in ads for Via Venetto shoes—a company which the couple owns—a poster portraying a man lying on his back and holding a snake while a woman's foot in a high-heeled shoe is perched on his chin. A caption accompanying the ad says that "Adam would have enjoyed the feel" of such an experience.

The letter to the Kippermans noted, "Imagine a woman lying on her back holding a snake while a man's foot is propped on her chin. Further imagine a caption accompanying this portrayal implying that a woman 'would enjoy the feel' of such an experience. Would there be a protest of such an ad on an organized boycott of such a product? Would you join such a protest and boycott? We hope you would."

NOCM's work, stated the letter, "focuses on affirming the humanity of both men and women. Unfortunately, your poster dehumanizes men into a caricature that can only be described as sexist."

The letter requested that the Kippermans "withdraw your poster from circulation, that you use your creative talents to develop a poster more reflective of non-sexist values, and that you encourage Via Venetto Shoes to develop another ad campaign more reflective of these values."

The NOCM letter asked the Kippermans to respond no later than March "as we do not wish to take our case to the news media and bring you adverse publicity."

STUDY GROUP TO DISCUSS BOOK BY NOCM FOUNDER

NOCM-DC is forming a study group for men in the Washington area, centered on discussing a recently critically-acclaimed book on men and our personal and social characteristics.

The book is entitled *Why Men Are The Way They Are* by Warren Farrell, a founder of NOCM and a long time specialist on men's issues. Published in hardback only in 1986, it can be obtained for \$17.95 at most local bookstores. The NOCM-DC steering committee is examining ways to make the book available for the study group at a reduced rate.

If you are interested in joining such a study group, please notify Mark Dressler at 1831 Belmont Road NW, Apt 104, Washington DC 20009; or call (202) 234-4430.

APRIL MONTHLY MEETING FOCUSES ON ACQUAINTANCE RAPE

This month's NOCM meeting will focus on acquaintance rape. We will examine how male peer interactions sustain rape supportive behavior. We will also look at men's alternatives to violence, and at the creation of male peer interactions fostering behavior that is supportive of women. Jack Straton will outline the problem and lead a discussion of possible solutions. Jack founded and was director for two years of Men Against Rape in Eugene, Oregon.

As this issue focuses on women and since one of the leaders comes to us from the Rape Crisis

Center, this will be an especially good meeting for women to attend. Bring a friend of either gender, and join us. The National Organization for Changing Men has chosen the preposition carefully because the focus on men's issues should include women. Women are encouraged to be members. We would like to selectively open our meetings to women, although for the sake of creating a spirit of candor between men some future meetings may be closed.

The meeting will be held at the United Methodist Church on 20th and G Streets, NW. Enter at the 20th Street entrance and come to the 2nd floor Reading Room by 7:00. There is a concert this evening in the same building, so we have been asked to arrive promptly.

NEW GROUP FOR MEN WHO WANT TO ELIMINATE RAPE

by Jack Straton

Seventy-five per cent of all rapes are committed by men known to the victim. It is clear that we must take responsibility for stopping rape, for it is men in our peer group who rape.

In a recent survey by Dr. Mary Koss of 7,000 students on 35 college campuses, one in twelve men admitted to having fulfilled the definition of rape or attempted rape, yet virtually none of these men considered themselves rapists. We can have a very great impact on rape by acknowledging the relationships between our attitudes and the fostering and support of rape among our peers. An added benefit is that as we change those attitudes among men that lead to rape, we automatically change those attitudes that lead to domestic violence and homophobia. Groups in many other cities are active in school, community, and media education on rape, including co-presentations with women.

There are reasons why each of us should consider becoming personally involved in working to create a rape-free society. Working with a group of evolving men, and in association with activist women, on such a positive goal is a very valuable, fulfilling experience. Personal stories about our own socialization are one of the most effective means to help both men and women understand and eliminate the roots of rape and rape-like behavior in men. And consideration of our experiences also helps us in our own transformations.

But the most important reason for men becoming personally involved in stopping rape is that we *must* if we want to reduce the one-in-three chance that women we know (friends, partners, children...) now have of being raped in their lifetime.

This is an invitation to men in this community, and any women who would like to work from this perspective, to join us in working to stop rape. Our first meeting will be April 6, 1987, at 7:30 p.m. at the home of Marshall Jones, just across Connecticut Avenue from the Van Ness Metro stop at 3001 Veazey, Apt. 226, Washington DC, (202) 362-0032. Those interested should call Gerry Sütter at home (703) 573-0611 or work (703) 931-1000, or myself at home (301) 552-1014 or work (301) 286-3589.

Or write: Jack Straton, 8559 Greenbelt Road, #T3, Greenbelt, MD 20770.

JOIN NOCM-DC'S MEDIA MONITORING NETWORK

by Mark Dressler

NOCM-DC is setting up a media monitoring network to let advertisers, news officials, and business people in the area know that men in the Washington area are concerned about portrayals that dehumanize them.

A media monitoring network can involve NOCM supporters who might not be able to come to meetings in a united campaign to support a humane portrayal of men. All it takes for each person to get involved is a phone call and a stamp for a letter. Here's how you can help.

1. Clip ads or articles which you find offensive. Call and find out the name, address and phone number of the individuals responsible, and send them a letter expressing your concern.

2. Don't get needlessly angry in your letter. A calm letter which clearly and firmly expresses your concern is more persuasive than an angry one. Since those people who may not realize our concerns may agree with us later, be friendly but firm in your letter.

3. Send copies of your clippings and your letter, together with any replies you may have received to Mark Dressler, 1831 Belmont Road NW, Apt. 104, Washington, DC 20009; (202) 234-4430. With your permission, we'll excerpt your letter in the next issue of this newsletter.

MEN IN MOVEMENT/WORKS OF ART

Have you ever considered yourself as an artistic masterpiece? Consider, if you will, the character and physical composition of your body's structure. It makes no difference if you're large or small, thin or stout; there is an artistic theme to your being.

All it takes is a little understanding about the concept of artistic composition and you can create a very exciting living moving sculpture out of your own body. The process is not only exciting and gratifying for others to watch, but also puts you in touch with a deep internal source of energy and personal understanding which is non-intellectual.

If you think you would enjoy an adventure into the movement of your own body as a dynamic artistic expression, join Larry Brown on May 7 at 7:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall of the United Methodist Church at 1920 G Street NW, Washington DC.

Larry is a management consultant who formerly danced professionally, studying technique and dance composition with the Joffrey Ballet, Merce Cunningham, Wolf Trap Academy, The Dance Project and others. More recently, he has devoted his energy to Hatha and Siddha Yoga, which he has taught privately and through the YWCA.

NOCM PRINCIPLES

The National Organization for Changing Men is an organization supporting men as they undergo the process of change so evident in men's lives today. NOCM reflects a pro-feminist and gay-affirmative perspective, is open to men and women, and is committed to a broad goal of social and personal change.

We believe that the great changes now taking place in the roles and opportunities of women and men will be positive for men as well as women. By questioning the old-fashioned rules of masculinity, which came along with the assumption of male superiority, men have the opportunity to be freer, happier, and more fulfilled as human beings. Traditional masculinity includes many positive qualities in which we take pride and find strength (independence, courage, self-reliance, etc.). But it also contains qualities which have limited and harmed us: excessive involvement with work, isolation from our children, discomfort in expressing emotions, lack of close friendships, excessive competitiveness and aggressiveness, and many others. We believe that men can help one another to unlearn the traditional masculine lessons that have limited our options and caused so many problems for ourselves and others.

As an organization for changing men, we strongly support the continuing struggle of women for full equality. We acknowledge the insights and positive social changes that feminism has stimulated in our society for both women and men. We oppose such injustices to women as economic and legal discrimination, rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment, and many others. We also support reform of policies that may affect men unfairly, such as child custody laws. Women and men can and should work together as allies to change the injustices that have so often made men and women see one another as enemies.

One of the strongest and deepest anxieties of most American men is their fear of homosexuality. This "homophobia" is a major cause of exaggerated masculine behavior. It is a debilitating burden to heterosexual men and contributes directly to the many injustices experienced by gay, lesbian, and bisexual persons. We call for an end to all forms of discrimination based on sexual orientation and for the creation of a gay-affirmative society.

We acknowledge, too, that many people are victimized today because of their race, social class, age, religion, and physical condition. We believe that such injustices are vitally connected to patriarchy, with its fundamental premise of the unequal distribution of power. Our goal is to change not just ourselves or other men as individuals, but the society as a whole, including institutions which have perpetuated inequality.

We welcome to membership any person who agrees in substance with these principles.